



January 18, 2017

Contact: Lesli Gray  
(972) 439-4542  
[lesli\\_gray@fws.gov](mailto:lesli_gray@fws.gov)

## **Service Announces Public Scoping Process For American Electric Power's Proposed Conservation Plan for the American Burying Beetle**

*Project Covers 62 Counties in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas*

American Electric Power is developing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to address impacts to the endangered American burying beetle (ABB) that may result from the construction, operation and/or maintenance of electric transmission and distribution lines or other associated infrastructure in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas. The draft HCP would accompany American Electric Power's request for an Incidental Take Permit (ITP).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement (dEIS) to evaluate the impacts associated with alternatives associated with issuing the ITP to American Electric Power. The Service's dEIS will consider the proposed issuance of an Incidental Take Permit, supported by an HCP and a no action alternative. We are requesting public comment on the scope of the issues that the Service should consider in its environmental review of the proposed permit under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Service will use the comments as part of the development of the environmental review as required by NEPA.

Written comments on alternatives and issues to be addressed must be received by the close of business on February 21, 2017. Comments may be submitted to the Service in one of the following ways:

- Electronically: [OKES\\_HCP\\_EIS@fws.gov](mailto:OKES_HCP_EIS@fws.gov); or
- Fax: 918-581-7467, Attn: OKES HCP EIS; or
- U.S. Mail: Field Supervisor, Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 9014 E. 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Tulsa, OK 74129.

During the 30-day public comment period, four public scoping meetings will be held from 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. in the following locations:

**Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup>**  
Eastern Oklahoma State College  
McAlester Campus  
Conference Center  
1802 E College Avenue  
McAlester, OK 74501

**Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>**  
Texarkana College  
Truman Arnold Student Center  
Levi Hall Conference Room  
2500 N. Robinson Road  
Texarkana, TX 75599

**Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>**  
River Park Events Building  
121 Riverfront Drive  
Fort Smith, AR 72901

**Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>**  
Central Center  
Auditorium  
1028 E 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tulsa, OK 74120

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#) and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).*

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>